

Scenario: Repeated Threats of Violence

This fictional scenario demonstrates how the Workplace Safety and Health process may apply when a teacher experiences repeated threats of violence in the workplace.

The Situation

Over the past six weeks, a student has repeatedly made verbal threats toward a classroom teacher. Examples include:

- "I'm going to hit you after school."
- "You better watch out because I'll get you."
- One day I'm going to hurt you."

The threats have occurred on multiple occasions in both the classroom and the hallway and have been witnessed by students and staff members.

On Tuesday, after being redirected to follow classroom expectations, the student became visibly agitated, moved aggressively toward the teacher, clenched their fists, and stated, **"I'm going to hurt you right now."**

The teacher believed there was a reasonable risk of physical violence and immediately reported the incident to the principal.

Immediate Actions Taken

Following the incident:

- The student was removed from the classroom.
- The principal was notified immediately.
- A Workplace Safety and Health Violent Incident Report was completed on divisional reporting form.
- Witness statements were requested.
- A risk assessment and review of the safety plan were initiated.
- The teacher contacted their union representative.
- The teacher contacted their family physician due to the psychological impact of the incident.

Injury Sustained

Although the teacher did not sustain a physical injury, they experienced psychological effects, including fear, anxiety, and ongoing concern for their personal safety.

What Should the Teacher Do?

1. Report Every Threat

Every threat of violence should be reported, even if no physical assault occurs. Reporting helps identify patterns of behaviour, ensures incidents are documented, and supports the implementation of appropriate safety measures.



2. Document Everything

Maintain detailed records of every incident, including:

- Date and time
- Exact words or threats used
- Student behaviour
- Witnesses
- Actions taken by administration
- Any follow-up—or lack of follow-up

Detailed documentation is often critical if the behaviour escalates or additional intervention becomes necessary.

3. Notify the Principal or Supervisor

Report the incident as soon as possible. Under Manitoba's Workplace Safety and Health legislation, supervisors have a duty to take reasonable precautions to protect workers and to inform workers of known workplace hazards.

4. Request a Safety Plan

Ask what measures are being implemented to reduce the risk of future violence. Consider asking:

- What control measures are being put in place?
- Who has been informed of the risk?
- What should staff do if the student becomes threatening again?
- What emergency procedures are in place?

5. Involve the Workplace Safety and Health Committee

If the threats continue or you believe adequate safety measures have not been implemented, notify your Workplace Safety and Health Committee or Workplace Safety and Health Representative.

6. Contact Your Union

Contact your Local President or MTS Staff Officer for advice and support. Your union can assist with workplace safety concerns, reporting obligations, employer responsibilities, and available options.

7. Seek Medical or Psychological Support

Workplace violence can result in psychological as well as physical injuries. If the incident is affecting your health, sleep, anxiety, or ability to work, seek support from your family physician, a psychologist, MTS Kii, or another appropriate healthcare professional.

8. Consider the Right to Refuse Dangerous Work

If you have reasonable grounds to believe that continuing to perform your work presents a danger to your health or safety, you may have the right to refuse dangerous work while the situation is investigated and appropriate measures are implemented, in accordance with Manitoba's Workplace Safety and Health legislation.